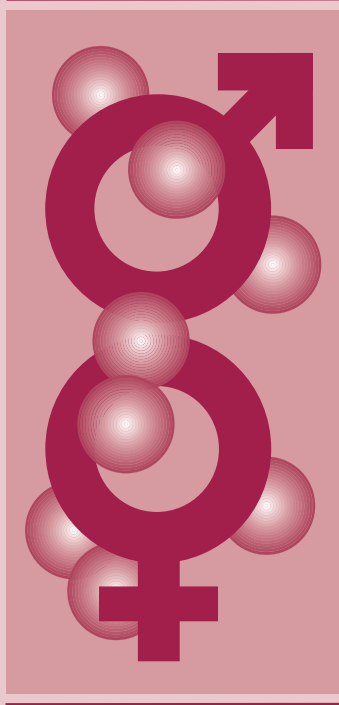


HERPES GENITAL



What Is Herpes?

Herpes is an infection caused by a virus. There are two types of herpes that are Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). Either of them can infect the mouth or genitals. Type 1 virus usually causes sores near the mouth. Many people call these cold sores or fever blisters. Type 2 virus usually causes sores near the genitals.

Millions of Americans have herpes, but not all of them are aware of it.

How Do You Get Herpes?

Any skin-to-skin contact can spread herpes from a person who has the virus to a person who does not. Sexual contact when sores or blisters are present also spreads the virus. The virus is passed from the site of infection to the site of contact.

Over 70 percent of these infections are passed from one person to another by people who do not know they have herpes.

What Are the Symptoms?

The first signs appear from two to 21 days after sex with a person who has the virus. Small fluid-filled sores appear. They may itch, burn, or be very painful. Flu-like symptoms are also common. The first outbreak lasts from one or two weeks. Then, the sores begin to dry, form scabs, and heal. They rarely leave scars.

You can get herpes from people who have the virus **even if they have no symptoms**. Herpes often looks like other skin diseases. See a doctor for a test.

What Is a Recurrence?

After the first infection heals, the virus leaves the area of the sores and stays near the spinal cord. It does not cause any infection there. We don't know what makes the virus become active and travel to the mouth or genitals again. Some people with herpes have one to six outbreaks each year. Some people have none.

Some say that diet, stress, other illness or skin irritation trigger outbreaks. Each person is different. Later outbreaks have fewer sores, heal faster and are less painful than the first infection.

Problems with Pregnancy

Pregnant women with genital herpes can give the disease to their babies. **This is most serious if the woman gets infected for the first time when she is pregnant.** It is very important that the doctor be told if a woman or any of her partners has genital herpes.

Is There a Cure?

There is no cure for herpes at this time. But, there is a drug that your doctor can prescribe that may help the sores heal faster and reduce the number of outbreaks.

If you have sores:

- Keep the area clean and dry
- Don't touch the sores
- Wash your hands after contact with the sores
- Don't have sex until the sores are healed and new skin covers the area.

Herpes and AIDS

The herpes virus and HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, are two very different viruses. You can get one or both if your sex partner is infected. Any infection (like herpes) in the genital area can make it easy for other germs (like HIV) to enter the body.

REMEMBER . . .

There are over 500,000 new herpes infections each year in America.

See a doctor as soon as you can. Don't wait. Tests should be done when the sores are new. Get tested for other STDs when you see a doctor about herpes.

How to Prevent Herpes

The best way to avoid this or any other sexually transmitted disease (VD) is to abstain from sex. This means not having sex at all. The next best way is to have sex with one uninfected person who only has sex with you. This is called being faithful or fidelity within marriage.

People who have sex with more than one person must be responsible for protecting themselves. To prevent STDs:

- Don't get drunk or high before having sex
- Don't use IV street drugs — never share needles or works
- Know that many STDs have no symptoms
- Know that you can have more than one STD at a time
- Know that birth control pills do not prevent infection
- Have fewer sex partners or don't have sex at all
- Know your partners — go with them for STD and HIV/AIDS tests
- Change the ways you have sex so there is no risk of infection
- Learn how to talk about condoms with all your sex partners
- Learn the right way to use condoms
- Use a new latex condom with a spermicide every time you have sex.

Condoms are not 100 percent safe for stopping the spread of herpes, but they are much better than taking chances. Use the kind with a spermicide to help get rid of STD germs.

If you need more information call your doctor
or local health department.

Or call the
STD National Hotline
1-800-227-8922

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